

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 /062 W
-----098188 311259Z /53

R 310631Z JAN 78
FM USINT BAGHDAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5586
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 0199

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, PINS, IZ
SUBJECT: SHIA RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES ARE
REPORTED PEACEFUL

REF: BAGHDAD 0117

1. TO USINT'S KNOWLEDGE SHIA RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES ON
OCCASION OF 40TH DAY OF MOURNING AFTER THE ANNIVERSARY
OF THE MARTYRDOM OF HUSSEIN PASSED THIS YEAR WITHOUT
ANY CLASHES BETWEEN THE WORSHIPERS AND AUTHORITIES.
MEDIA REPORTS INDICATE REGIME WENT OUT OF ITS WAY TO
SUPPORT AND FACILITATE RELIGIOUS OBSERVATIONS WITHIN
ACCEPTABLE BOUNDS.

2. USINT OFFICER WHO DROVE THROUGH KERBALA PROVINCE
ON JANUARY 27 OBSERVED LARGE NUMBERS OF PILGRIMS PROCEEDING
TO KERBALA ON FOOT. VARIOUS REPORTS INDICATE THAT
TRADITIONAL RELIGIOUS PROCESSIONS DID TAKE PLACE ON
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JANUARY 29, AND IT IS UNDERSTOOD THAT LIMITED DEGREES OF
PUBLIC SELF-FLAGELLATION WERE PERMITTED.

3. PRESIDENT BAKR PUT HIS PERSONAL AUTHORITY BEHIND
CONCILIATORY POLICY. AT HIS REQUEST THE GOVERNOR OF
KERBALA GAVE A DINNER FOR THE PILGRIMS, A MASS AFFAIR.
THE GOVERNOR, IN THE COMPANY OF LOCAL BAATH

PARTY OFFICIALS, ALSO RECEIVED THE HEADS OF THE VARIOUS RELIGIOUS PROCESSIONS. THE PROCESSION LEADERS ARE REPORTED TO HAVE EXPRESSED THEIR DEEP APPRECIATION FOR THE CARE WHICH THE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IS GIVING TO THE HOLY SHRINES. THEY INCIDENTLY DENOUNCED THE ACTS OF TREASON COMMITTED BY EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT SADAT, WHO WAS CONDEMNED AS THE BETRAYER OF ARABISM AND ISLAM.

4. COMMENT: BASED ON OUR PRESENT INFORMATION, IT APPEARS THAT REGIME HAS SUCCESSFULLY MANAGED TASK OF MAINTAINING SECURITY WHILE ALLOWING SUBSTANTIAL DEGREE OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM TO SHIA WORSHIPPERS.
PECK

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Message Attributes

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